



MONTHLY REPORT MAY 2020

Commercial and Recreational Fisheries

- The economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic has thankfully loosened its grip on some shellfish markets, as we saw continued quahog and blood clam harvests. However, oyster markets are way down, and the wild fishery is generally slow.
- The recreational fishery, on the other hand, saw a ten-fold increase in recreational harvesting as compared with May of 2019.
- We spent a lot of time corresponding with recreational shellfishing permit applicants and assisting them with getting their 2020 permits while Town Hall is closed.
- Our conservative estimate of commercial catches is more than 280 bushels of quahogs, 100 bushels of oysters and 85 bushels of blood clams. We estimate that more than 17 bushels of quahogs and 33 bushels of oysters were harvested recreationally.
- The Harbormasters allowed us to extend the channel quahog relay program until May 15, 2020, but no boats took advantage of it because quahog markets had come back.
- Vibrio control season started on May 19 and will continue through October 19.
- Deputy Constable Drew Ryan returned to oversee the recreational fishery and help Assistant Constable Johnny Mankevetch with our propagation (shellfish nursery) efforts.

Enforcement

- The department had a few issues with people fishing the recreational area without permits. All catches were returned to harbor and verbal warnings were issued.
- One recreational permitholder was in a closed area, and catch was returned to harbor.
- A grantholder was asked to remove buoys that had been placed outside his grant, which he did before the deadline.

State and Town Relations

- Shellfish Constable Nancy Civetta spoke with the Mass. Division of Marine Fisheries, the Town Administrator and Beach Director about limiting seasonal recreational shellfishing permits due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Civetta attended BOS meeting where a public hearing was held to conduct a lottery for grant #861/861-A. In addition, the board denied a request to issue a commercial shellfishing permit to someone who did not meet the one-year domicile requirement of the regulations. At the recommendation of the Shellfish Department, the board decided to not issue seasonal recreational shellfishing permits in 2020.
- Ryan reached out to seasonal recreational permit applicants to let them know the Town would only be selling annual permits in 2020. Most opted for the annual permit.
- We petitioned the new director of the Mass. Division of Marine Fisheries to continue to consider closing Wellfleet Harbor to horseshoe crab harvest.
- Civetta attended a Shellfish Advisory Board meeting where overwintering changes were approved and requests were made for shellfishing community input on intertidal usage needs for potential Herring River Restoration mitigation.
- Civetta and Mankevetch called into a Barnstable County Shellfish Officers Assn. meeting.

- Civetta attended a Department Heads meeting and Emergency Management meetings as well as a Dredging Task Force meeting.
- Civetta attended a Conservation Commission meeting about a property at the end of Old Wharf Road whose owner wants to add a revetment and about a beach nourishment project at Sewell's Gutter. She participated in a site visit with abutters. She also had a conference call with the owner of a property on Lieutenant's Island about a shellfishing access route on their property.
- Many thanks to the DPW for making us red metal COVID-19 Best Shellfishing Practices signs. Deputy Constable Chris Manulla installed them at three entrances to the recreational area.
- Civetta attended a listening session about an intermunicipal agreement for the development of a shoreline management plan.
- Mankevetch accompanied John Portnoy from the Friends of the Herring River to locate a testing site for fecal coliform monitoring on Egg Island.
- The state conducted plankton samples.
- Our old barge outboard motors were sold via Municibid online auctions.

Propagation

- The Massachusetts Oyster Project donated more than ten yards of overwintered oyster shells, which had been aged for two years to the department for use in cultching.
- Town grant was cleaned up after high winds.
- Mankevetch began preparing for the cultching season by deploying buoys around the harbor. He also worked with a group of volunteers to create an oyster free area on the Indian Neck recreational area to prepare it for cultching.
- Barge was set up with equipment for cultching, which is scheduled to start June 1st.
- We purchased 40 stacks of 10 hats to use as spat collecting devices.
- The SPAT program for buying shellfish from Wellfleet shellfishermen and donating it to local food banks and care services will be ending soon due to the return of markets.

Education and Public Relations

- Sadly, the 2019-2020 AmeriCorps program was cancelled, and the members left Wellfleet at the end of the month. Our Individual Placement member Travis Lavenski contributed in ways great and small to our department's work, such as helping us prepare for a cultch spat monitoring study and to better understand the increase in recreational permit use during COVID-19. His bright mind, positive disposition and can-do attitude will be sorely missed.
- After careful consideration by the department, Civetta did an interview with Marnie Crawford Samuelson as part of her Outer Cape Portrait series in *The Provincetown Independent*.
- We distributed three Town Shellfishing Criers to the commercial shellfishing industry.
- We continued sending weekly welcome letters with important news to all new recreational permitholders.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Civetta, Shellfish Constable